

Meeting Guidelines (revised 10/17/02)

In order to ensure orderly debate and decision making, a system of motions is used and there is an established order for dealing with each type of motion (order of precedence).

Under this system items are brought up for consideration through a main motion and a vote is taken on the final decision on that motion. The important elements of the procedure have to do with:



How motions are made,



What the ranking or “order of precedence” is (what gets voted on first), and



How motions are finally decided.

There are basically four categories of motions that a meeting group will usually deal with. These are the **main motion** (the heart of the matter), **subsidiary motion** (supports or supplements the matter), **privileged motion** (special exception aside from the matter), and **incidental motion** (not directly related to the matter, but has an effect on the process).

Following is the order in which motions have to be dealt with before moving on to the next item (order of precedence), beginning with the highest:

Privileged	Fix the time to adjourn
	Adjourn
	Recess
	Raise a question of privilege
	Call for orders of the day
Subsidiary	Lay on the table
	Call for previous question
	Limit or extend limits of debate
	Postpone to a certain time
	Refer to a committee
	Amend the main motion
Main Motion	Postpone indefinitely
	Vote on main motion

There are usually at a minimum eight steps that a motion will go through from the time the presiding officer recognizes the person proposing the motion until the chair announces the final decision (vote) on that motion.

Following is a brief description of the four primary types of motions used to conduct business:



Main motion - The main motion brings an item of business before the group for debate and resolution.

NOTE: Any subsidiary motion (usually a motion to amend) that is on the table must be voted on before the main motion may be voted on.



Subsidiary motion - Motions that relate directly to the main motion. The most commonly used subsidiary motions are:

- Motion to postpone indefinitely
- Motion to amend
- Motion to refer to a committee
- Motion to postpone to a certain time/date
- Motion to limit or extend limits of debate
- Motion to move the previous question (lets vote)
- Motion to lay on the table

NOTE: If there is a subsidiary motion on the table, it must be dealt with before moving on. When a motion is tabled, all amendments are also tabled.



Privileged motion - Have overriding importance; are not debatable; may interrupt other business; and are not related to the main motion. The most commonly used privileged motions are:

- Call for the orders of the day;
- raise a question of privilege;
- recess;
- adjourn;
- fix time at which to adjourn.



Incidental Motion – Relate to the business of the group and do not introduce a new subject. These are:

- ✓ Method of voting
- ✓ Division of the question
- ✓ Withdraw a motion
- ✓ Point of order
- ✓ Parliamentary Inquiry



The **eight steps** that a main motion without amendment typically goes through before it is finally decided are:

1. Person making the motion asks to be recognized by the chair
2. The chair recognizes
3. Motion is made
4. Motion is seconded
5. Chair restates the motion
6. Group debates the motion
7. Group votes on the motion (a **vote of the majority of the membership** is required for a motion to move forward)
8. Chair announces the result



Debating a motion



After a motion has been formally restated by the chairperson it is open for debate.



A member must be recognized by the chair before they can comment (a member who has not yet spoken on an item should be recognized before one who has already expressed their opinion).



Before taking the vote, the chair should ask if there is any further discussion



Speaker should respectfully address the chair and any other member at all times.



Speaker should not interrupt any other speaker



Speaker should confine comments to the subject and try to keep comments brief.

Miscellaneous Rules

Withdraw a motion - A motion may be withdrawn if it has not yet been restated by the chair (does not appear in the minutes).

Reconsider a motion - A motion to reconsider can be made on the same day the vote was taken by one who has voted on the prevailing side

Rescind - Any member can move to rescind an action before the vote is taken this requires majority vote

Reading of Minutes - Reading of the minutes can be postponed by majority vote. If not read before adjournment, they must be read at the next meeting before any other minutes

Suspend the rules - A suspension of the rules may be requested in order to change the order of the presentations

Glossary of Terms

Appeal from decision of the chair: used if you disagree with the decision of the chair (must be done immediately after the chair's ruling). Requires a second and must be voted on to overrule or sustain the chair's decision.

Call for orders of the day: used to stick to the agenda if the meeting starts to wander. (May be put to a vote at the chair's discretion).

Call for previous question: used to close debate and call for a vote

Divide the question: used to consider two or more parts separately if the question has more than one part and each part can stand alone (requires majority vote).

Parliamentary inquiry: used to ask for clarification on the rules

Point of information: used for clarification if the issues become confusing

Point of order: used when a member thinks there is a violation in procedure

Raise a question of privilege: used to address an issue regarding the meeting environment or general conduct.

Refer: used to refer to a committee for further study

Table: is used to put a motion aside temporarily to consider another motion.